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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - DeLay Indictment - Turkey
PARIS - Friday, September 30, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

11. DeLay Indictment

12. EU Membership Negotiations with Turkey

(B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

The French Prime Minister's monthly press conference dominates front pages and editorials today. De Villepin addressed the issue of employment, highlighting the drop in unemployment figures for the fifth month in a row, as well as his about-face in plans to privatize the ferry operator SNCM. Left-of-center Liberation accuses Villepin of "Copping Out" on its front-page with regard to the SNCM and business-oriented La Tribune says "Villepin Forced to Change Course." On the lay-offs planned in France by Hewlett-Packard, right-of-center Le Figaro's editorial points out de Villepin's 'punitive' statements are antithetical to his wish to boost foreign investment.

Liberation reports that the Islamists belonging to a group calling itself Ansar al-Fath, arrested in the suburbs of Paris on Monday, admitted to preparing acts of terrorism that were to be carried out in the Paris subway, at one of Paris' airports and at the headquarters of the DST (the French DHS).

Left-of-center Liberation calls Tom DeLay "The Right Hand That May Handicap Bush." (See Part C)

With only a few days left until negotiations open with Ankara on EU membership for Turkey, left-of-center Liberation's editorial puts the accent on a "divided Europe that cannot even agree on the issues to be discussed with the Turks." Le Figaro puts the emphasis on the "war of wills" between London and Vienna. "The UK is determined to neutralize Austria, the only European country left that openly wishes to prevent negotiations from opening with Turkey on Monday." (See Part C)

Le Figaro reports on FM Douste Blazy's trip to Egypt putting forward that "his message was aimed as much, if not more, at French Muslims as to the Egyptians themselves. preparing the way for a battery of anti-terrorism laws that are under discussion in Paris."

Left-of-center Le Monde's New York correspondent Corinne Lesnes analyzes Karen Hughes' trip to the Middle East sarcastically portraying Hughes' astonishment that the "whole world does not want to live like Americans do."

Right-of-center Le Figaro carries a profile of the newly appointed Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts. Washington correspondent Philippe Gelie calls Roberts an "almost perfect choice for Bush. He is intellectually nimble and ideologically elusive. Roberts brilliantly succeeded the test of the hearings before the Senate Committee, and after two months of questioning the Committee knew as little about him as on the first day.

Economic right-of-center Les Echos' Gilles Senges asks "Is the Airbus A350 worth a trade war with the U.S.?" "Airbus is on the verge of officially announcing the launching of the manufacture of the A350. An announcement that will shatter the moratorium between France and the U.S. and restart the latent trade war between Europe and the U.S."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

DeLay Indictment

"The Right Hand That May Handicap Bush"

Left-of-center Liberation's Pascal Riche writes (09/30): "This is really the last thing that George Bush needed. For the Republicans the indictment of Bush's best ally in the House is one more set back added to a long list that includes the 'vietnamization' of Iraq, the fiasco surrounding the recovery efforts after hurricane Katrina, the soaring price of gas, the catastrophic budget deficit and the President's approval

rating that has taken a nose-dive. The atmosphere in Washington is one of corruption, of the end of a reign, an atmosphere that needs to be dissipated before the November 2006 elections. DeLay may be one of Bush's best allies on the Hill but if he remains in the spotlight too long he will become very cumbersome.

EU Membership Negotiations with Turkey

"Bazaar"

Left-of-center Liberation's editorial by Patrick Sabatier (09/30): "The Turks are as divided as the Europeans on the question of their membership to the EU. The europhiles among them see this membership as a step towards modernizing their country and as a possibility for future prosperity. But the nationalists, whether politically from the left or the right, cultivate a sort of europhobia. Turkish europhobes are gaining sway, on a par with Turkophobe Europeans. And yet no one can deny that economically EU membership is in Turkey's interest. Just as, from a strategic point of view, it is in the EU's interest to anchor Turkey to the continent."

STAPLETON